



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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PAINTING BY 18TH-CENTURY ITALIAN MASTER GAETANO GANDOLFI AMONG WORKS ADDED TO CMA COLLECTION

(Cleveland, OH) The Cleveland Museum of Art has placed on view a newly acquired private devotional painting of the *Holy Family* by Gaetano Gandolfi, the most distinguished member of the most prominent family of artists in 18th-century Bologna, Italy. This painting is joined by about ten additional works in the museum's recent acquisitions gallery. The group will remain on view for three months.

The *Holy Family* is a mature work by a draftsman and painter who was admired in his day by his Italian and English patrons. His down-to-earth naturalism continued a tradition begun by the Carracci family over 150 years earlier. In this tight-knit composition, a peasant-like St. Joseph holds the scriptures for the child Jesus, who is on the Virgin Mary's lap; the elderly Joseph also holds the flowering rod that, according to legend, signified he was divinely chosen to be Mary's spouse. Joseph looks with concern upwards to the Virgin, who in turn looks worriedly upward to a pair of cherubs. The viewer of this private devotional painting was meant to understand that the young Christ reads of his future in the gospels, and that the suffering that he will endure is reflected in Mary's sorrowful gaze.

The painting's condition is extraordinary, in that it apparently has never been "lined," a conservation technique of adhering a new canvas to the back of a painting. Meant to preserve or repair a painting, the lining process involves heat or pressure or both. While lining has saved many delicate paintings, it can subtly flatten the texture of a paint surface. In the *Holy Family*, the artist's brush strokes still give a particularly alive and three-dimensional impression to the painting—to the modeling of the characters' features and garments as well as to the shadowy architectural details in the background.

The other works on view come from artistic traditions of Europe, Africa, the pre-Columbian Americas, and Japan. *Untitled*, a vessel by Kenya native Magdalene Anyango N Odundo, is the newest ceramic, and the first contemporary African object to enter CMA's collection. Odundo's smoothly burnished terra cottas are highly sculptural, in this case

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calling to mind the torso of a pregnant woman. This thin-walled example is light and graceful. It was fired twice, in high and low oxygen atmospheres, to take on a surface of bright orange and charcoal grey with an irregular pattern known as fire-clouding. Odundo received formal training in graphics and ceramics in both Kenya and England, and has studied traditional pottery-making in Nigeria, Kenya, and the American southwest. The newly acquired vessel will complement contemporary Asian and Native American ceramics acquired by CMA in recent years.

The museum's renowned pre-Columbian collection has been enriched by the addition of three pre-Columbian gold ornaments. These pieces had been on loan to the museum and were recently included in a new installation of gold and ceramics from southern Central America and northern South America. A particularly challenging feat of lost-wax gold casting is a stocky, pugnacious figurine pendant, probably a chieftain, from Northern Colombia (Tairona, AD 1000-1550). His freely hanging pierced earrings were cast separately first, then affixed to a wax model of the figurine and encased in a clay mold. The figurine itself was created in a second casting, and emerged from the mold with his movable earrings in place. His flamboyant headdress features two bats, roosting upside down.

Two pendants from ancient Panama complete the group: one depicts a pair of supernatural warrior figures (Parita style, AD 700-1550), and the other, a fantastic crocodile-like being (Veraguas-Gran Chiriquí style, AD 1000-1550).

A number of pre-Columbian ceramics have been acquired, including CMA's finest Panamanian example, an unusual vessel modeled and decorated in the form of a turtle, probably made for a chief's burial (Parita style, AD 700-1550). The surface above its shoulder is painted in shapes suggesting the surface of a turtle's shell; at the shoulder, where upper and lower "shells" meet, the turtle's face, legs, and tail are depicted.

CMA's holdings are now quite strong in including four extraordinary vessels from the ancient Jōmon people, who lived on Japan's coast beginning in about 10,000 BC. The cooking vessel just acquired was made in about 2500 BC of hand-molded clay with impressed rope patterns and incised wavy lines. Its shape is distinct from other known wares of similar date, in that its cylindrical body splays into an essentially square opening. Though smaller than the "flame" pot acquired in 1984, it also flares upward and outward in a tour de force of ceramic form.

Snails on a Wall, a hanging scroll in paint and gold on paper, conveys the characteristic visual wit of eminent 18th-century Japanese painter Nagasawa Rosetsu. It is the only painting by Rosetsu in the Western Hemisphere in this style: rather than using the ink tones and palette predominant in Japanese painting, Rosetsu carefully depicted an earthen wall and two snails in a Western-influenced manner known as *doro-e* ("mud" or "earth" painting), using specially prepared paper and building up pigments like the brushstrokes

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of thick oil paint. In this commonplace scene, Rosetsu rendered the snails' trails in silver paint and applied his signature in gold—materials traditionally reserved for more noble subjects.

A remarkable portrait of a young boy is a major addition to CMA's holdings of works by pioneering French photographers. Created by Baron Louis-Adolphe Humbert de Molard, a founding member of the French Society of Photography, it may depict his son, who died in 1849, not long after this image was made. The boy's intense gaze and stiff pose bear out the exposure time of some several minutes required by the albumen negative process, a technique that yielded rich details but was usually used for architectural views and landscapes.

A red chalk drawing of a male nude is the first work by Baccio Bandinelli to enter the collection. Bandinelli, who opened one of the first drawing academies in Renaissance Italy, was among the most important sculptors and draftsmen of the 16th century. This drawing—a finished work, not a study—has been called one of the best of a series of works that Bandinelli created from live models, posed in difficult positions that are similar to but not exactly like the nudes in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling.

In the course of the next three months' exhibition of these works in the recent acquisitions gallery, the Bandinelli drawing will be rotated with two other newly acquired works on paper: an engraving by Dutch artist Jan Muller, *Cupid Discovers Psyche in His Bed* (ca. 1600); and *Interior of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna* by German lithography pioneer Karl Friedrich Schinkel (ca. 1810).

Among other works also entering the collection:

- a sidelong view of the CMA facade that once hung in the office of Benjamin Hubbell, one of the principal architects of the museum's original 1916 building; it was painted by the Viennese-born Cleveland artist Frederick Gottwald, and is part of a bequest from Hubbell's daughter, Virginia Hubbell
- a headdress from the Kuba people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire), in the "Kalyeem" form worn as part of the court costume of a temporary regent, elaborately decorated with shells and beadwork in geometric and linear patterns
- *Bird, Plum Blossoms and Bamboo*, a hanging scroll in ink on paper by 19th-century Korean court painter Yang Ki-hun
- a painted work table made in Philadelphia in about 1850, given by Dr. and Mrs. Richard C. Distad (Cecilia Neall Bartlett)
- Japanese album leaves, Tibetan paintings, and other works bequeathed by long-time CMA registrar Lillian Kern, who acquired them under the guidance of former director Sherman E. Lee
- and, as a gift from CMA's oldest auxiliary group, The Print Club of Cleveland, an early etching by Odilon Redon from 1866 called *Fear*.

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